

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



BETTER PLANTS

God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden



VOLUME II

SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER, 1924

NUMBER 5

Eighty-five Years with My Peonies

Altho my yesterdays have made me what I am today, it may be I had not thought to live to see the joy that last has come to me.

I am greatly pleased, surprised and complimented on being requested to collate memories of the Queens of my garden.

My earliest recollection of mother's garden is great clumps of big red peonies, and the old double white both growing each side of the gate, during my girlhood. I had not known there were other kinds until I visited the nursery with my husband in 1862 for fruit trees.

Ours was a country vegetable garden, 50 by 50 feet, with a 5-foot walk thru the center, and a 3-foot bed each side for annuals, perennials and small shrubs. The peonies were all planted in these beds, where sooner or later we grew to perfection every desirable hardy plant that the florists, the forest, and friends could tempt us with, converting this late barren meadow into a veritable little paradise of birds and butterflies, fruits and flowers, such as Mother Eve never dreamed of—nor had she any great double red, white and pink peonies.

Before the days of the automobile, there was no place within reach which offered greater allurements for picnic parties than our little woodland and the 100 by 300 foot lawn (mind not even you had prior to 1900 the attractions you offer today). The teacher of botany brought her class often each summer. Having all kinds of fruits, berries and loads of grapes, and always a guest of honor, I furnished hot or cold drinks and ice cream, so that "the wonderful weeks when the Peonies bloom" were annually looked forward to as the event of the year.

The Queen, Kelway's early, single, clustered, snow white, without hybridizing, is the royal mother of all the 1,200 Pleas Peonies. Here is included every type, color and tint, in single, semi-double, crown and little Japs, to full double, with Elwood Pleas, Jubilee and a few others as first prize winners; then there are a full score, equally double and pretty, with more than 100 named kinds, any of them so beautiful that a flower lover not surfeited with better kinds, would rejoice having. I have great faith in heredity, believing that seeds of The Queen, if not hybridized, will do equally well again.

I am often asked, "Which among all these do you like best, where all are so pretty, and so many so nearly alike?" It is no longer a secret that my favorite "Elwood Pleas" is called by the name I loved best, because of its dainty shell-pink blooms, its superb form, its annual uniform crop of clustered blooms.

Some writer criticizes our naming peonies for members of our family,

By Mrs. Sarah A. Pleas



If you have never seen a bloom of The Peony Pleas "Jubilee," there is yet a lot of peony joy in store for you. If you have seen the bloom, you must have been captivated by it, and you probably have heard of the originator—a woman who can recall the peonies of "Covered Wagon Days," and who is still actively engaged in peony hybridization. Here is an article by Mrs. Pleas herself, prepared with a hand that is stiff and cramped with age, but from a heart overflowing with the enthusiasm so general among lovers of the hardy garden.

maintaining that "it is equivalent to throwing bouquets at one's self." I reply, this man either has no wife and children that are dearer than his life, or he has never grown a few hundred or thousand peonies thru their tender infancy, transplanting and cultivating for six or eight additional years until they become prize winners, or he would instinctively and just as surely name some of his best for his dear ones, as he will leave them by will, his estates and bank accounts.

Among the sweet memories of the dear old home are the festival picnic parties on the shaded lawn, and the moonlight garden parties with peonies blooming, songbirds nesting in each vine, bush and tree, and the young folks dancing upon my garden ways, while Mr. Katydid sits in the branches of a tree fiddling his gayest garden lyric for the young folks' jubilee, calling loud and oft repeating "Katy, Katy, Katydid, Kat-i-e-e-e-e."

We learn as much by our mistakes as by successes. Having planted seeds much too thickly, I've been thinning and replanting ever since, to be able to secure

good blooms; labeling each as it bloomed with a number in the row, its color and temporary name, subject to one more appropriate. All this has been recorded in a little book until full, extending from five to seven years. No one book contained one-half the names.

The garden is my priest, pulpit and shrine. Many of the happiest days of my life have been spent here. Nowhere do I feel so near my Maker as when alone here, seeing and contemplating what He has done and is still doing for me. I believe He is as near me here as He ever will be. I hear His voice in the whispering trees, I see His smiles in my bright peonies. This was the kindergarten where my children took first lessons in birds, botany, horticulture and entomology, where Elwood Pleas and I have spent many of the happiest days of our eventful lives, with the children in many childish pranks.

"There is nothing so sweet in the old-fashioned home
As the wonderful week when the Peonies bloom."

An Appeal to My Queen Peony

It was in the gladsome Springtime,
My little world was all sunshine,
On this my golden Wedding Day,
My natal anniversary,
When this glorious white Peony
First opened its grand blooms for me;
Since it came on this festal day,
I called it my Jubilee.

Dear Jubilee, Sweet Jubilee,
Thou art my grandest Peony;
The Peony world at their Show,
Paid highest honor to your blow;
I would that you now have a court
Of royal blood, where you may sport
The daughters of Kelway's White Queen,
Whose grace and fragrance shall win fame.—SARAH A. PLEAS.



Residence of Mrs. W. A. Erdman, Stroudsburg, Penna. Peonies, Boltonia, Phlox, Iris, Lilies, and Shrubs.



Farr's Iris in the garden of Mr. Joe Zuart, Des Moines, Iowa

ANNOUNCING A CHANGE OF LOCATION AND A GENERAL MOVING SALE

I do not see how anyone who has a few square feet of vacant ground space, and a few spare dollars, can afford to miss the opportunities offered in this issue of BETTER PLANTS. You may be hardened to mercantile sales, to moving sales, to fire sales, etc. You cannot be hardened to, nor doubtful of, a nursery moving sale, because such an event occurs very seldom and then less than once in a generation.

You may have heard rumors and may have read about our change of location. I am now ready to announce details.

By 1926 we will be located on the William Penn Highway, 12 miles west of Reading. Our present location is within Wyomissing and Reading limits. The overhead has been increasing accordingly, and, apart from fertile soil, the location is diminishingly desirable.

Persons who have visited the nursery, know that the farms and office are sadly isolated from the traffic arteries. This location was almost ideal when the business was small and before the days of the automobile. Now, both the growth of the business and the increasing number of callers, make a change in location almost imperative.

Anyone who is familiar with the Wyomissing location will agree with me that thousands of people will see the new nursery to where a dozen now see the present one. Eighty per cent of Berks County autoists are not familiar with the present location.

Sentiment and History

In former catalogs you have read many articles about Beautiful Wyomissing and my Dream Garden. Beautiful Wyomissing is becoming more beautiful each year, and the Dream Garden will ere long be the

attraction center of one of the finest municipal parks in the country.

The new place has not only the appeal of sentiment and beauty, but also that of history. It is known as the Conrad Weiser homestead, and is one of the oldest homesteads in Berks County. The original deed for the property was issued to Conrad Weiser by the Penn brothers, founders of Philadelphia.

Conrad Weiser is regarded as the George Washington of Berks County. His relations to and control of the Indians advanced the settlement and development of Berks County and Reading a great many years. His activities in military, political and financial affairs made him easily the most prominent man in early Berks County history.

Both Conrad Weiser's grave and the original dwelling are located on the farm. The local historic societies and associations are planning for a Memorial Park on the premises and by cooperation this will no doubt be my new Dream Garden.

What a treat there will be for motorists in years to come. A historic spot devoted to one of the country's pioneers; a beautifully planted collection of the world's better hardy plants, and a hardy plant nursery operating under the most modern and scientific methods and policies.

How the Moving Helps Customers

You may be interested in the activities associated with the moving of a nursery. A worthwhile nursery has already been established on the new farm. 75,000 peonies, thousands of evergreens, shrubs and shade trees have been lined out since August, 1923. All of this material was comparatively small or young when planted, and is reserved for 1926 sales. Material of rapid growth will be planted

on the Weiser farm later, and just in time for it to be of good quality by 1926.

In short, our procedure is to start the young plants on the new farm, and sell all the salable material from the Wyomissing nursery, thereby eliminating the bulk of actual moving.

Do you now see how our customers can help us to move without extra effort on their part and be well paid for so doing?

In this issue of BETTER PLANTS is probably the biggest opportunity. Other and lesser sales will be announced later.

PEONY ARISTOCRATS AT CUT PRICES

(Offer expires October 1, 1924)

1. It is not necessary to impress the value of these bargains on peony fans. Beginners are invited to investigate thoroughly.

2. All of the varieties included have held firm to price for many years. Ninety per cent of them will do so for years to come.

3. Note that none of these Peonies are rated under 8.0.

4. At sale prices, we cannot ship on open account. *Cash must accompany order.* Refund will be made if the roots (3 to 5 eye, strong, standard divisions) do not more than please you.

Rating	Variety	Catalog price	Sale price
8.9	Enchantress	\$7 50	\$5 00
8.1	Evangeline	5 00	3 50
8.8	Karl Rosenfield	3 00	2 00
8.9	Georgiana Shaylor	10 00	7 50
9.0	La France	10 00	7 50
9.0	La Lorraine	10 00	7 50
8.4	Lamartine	7 50	5 00
8.9	Marie Crousse	4 00	3 00
9.0	Milton Hill	4 00	3 00
9.4	Mme. Jules Dessert	6 00	4 00
8.4	Mme. Guyot	5 00	3 50
8.6	Primvere	5 00	3 50
9.0	Sarah Bernhardt	5 00	3 50
9.3	Walter Faxon	7 50	5 00

Orders will be booked and filled in the sequence received, and acceptance is subject to supply being unsold when the order arrives. Act promptly.

ENGLISH IRIS AT CUT PRICES

What is said elsewhere pertaining to the Aristocrat Peony bargain also applies to this list of newer iris of English introduction.

1. Cash must accompany orders.
2. Orders must amount to at least \$5.

Variety	Catalog price	Sale price
Ashyrian, deep violet	\$10 00	\$7 00
Blue Lagoon	3 00	2 00
Camelot, white and violet	2 00	1 25
Caporal, reddish violet	7 50	5 00
Colonel Candelot, copper	2 00	1 25
Crusader, violet-blue	2 00	1 25
Dimity, white	5 00	3 50
Dusky Maid, buff and mauve	4 00	3 00
Glitter, yellow and brown	2 50	1 75
Ivanhoe, lavender-violet	2 50	1 75
Kashmir White	2 50	1 75
Mrs. Tinley, violet-blue	5 00	3 50
Roseway, red-pink	2 00	1 25
Shalimar, blue and purple	2 00	1 25
Yvonne Pelletier, sky-blue	3 00	2 00

PERENNIAL MOVING SALE

Will you not help to move these thousand lots of husky, field-grown perennials? Move them to your garden and be paid for doing so. Here is the offer:

FREE PLANTS WITH EACH ORDER

For every \$3 worth of plants ordered in lots of Five or more, you may select Five additional plants of *any one variety* which will be included in your shipment without cost to you.

5 or more plants of one variety at 20 cts. each.
25 or more plants of one variety at 15 cts. each.

Conditions

1. Less than 5 plants of one variety cannot be included in this offer.
2. The selections must be confined to this list.
3. Cash must accompany order.

Cut-Flower Plants

Anthemis tectoria
Achillea, Cerise Queen
Achillea, Perry's White
Centaurea macrocephala
Pyrethrum hybridum
Chrysanthemum, Burbank's Alaska
Chrysanthemum semi-plena
Coreopsis lanceolata
Delphinium chinensis, blue
Gaillardia grandiflora
Heliosis Pitcheriana
Lobelia cardinalis
Lychnis viscaria splendens
Monarda, Cambridge Scarlet
Pentstemon barbatus torreyi
Pentstemon laevigatus digitalis
Physostegia virginiana alba
Veronica
Sweet William
Physalis Franchetii

Rockery Plants

Aquilegia canadensis
Aquilegia, L-sp'd Hybrids
Aubretia, hybrids
Cerastium tomentosum
Dianthus deltoides
Forget-me-nots
Funkia gigantea
Funkia elatior
Funkia Sieboldiana
Primula, hybrids
Phlox divaricata
Centaurea dealbata
Sempervivum glaucum
Sempervivum globiferum
Sempervivum tectorum
Sedum album
Sedum asiaticum
Sedum ibericum
Sedum Stahli
Sedum spectabilis
Sedum spectabilis, brilliant
Yucca

Perennials for Naturalizing

Aquilegia, L-sp'd Hybrids
Boltonia asteroides
Achillea, Perry's White
Heliosis Pitcheriana
Helianthus, Wolley Dod
Helianthus rigidus
Helianthus atrorubens
Hemerocallis
Rudbeckia, Golden Glow, Autumn Sun, Rays of Gold
Ranunculus, Dbl. Buttercup
Hardy Asters

Miscellaneous Perennials

Anchusa, Opal
Centaurea montana
Chelone Lyonii
Delphinium bellansomum
D. chinensis, blue; white
Digitalis grandiflora
Eryngium amethystinum
Heuchera sanguinea alba



Mrs. N. B. Barton, Barrington, R. I., says: "My garden is beautiful with your plants. They are thoroughly dependable."

Excelsior, violet-purple. E.	\$1 00
Formosa Alba, white. M.	35
Fulgida, red. E.	50
General Botha, dark pink. E.	75
General Cavaignac, violet-rose. L.	1 00
General Grant, solferino-red. M.	75
General Wolfe, light pink. E.	75
Gloire de Douai, purplish scarlet. M.	75
Judge Dillon, dark pink. E.	1 00
Lady Mayoress, white. L.	2 50
Lady Somerset, pink. E.	1 00
Langport Queen, red. E.	1 00
Liberty, light red. M.	1 00
Louise Renault, pink. E.	50
Louis Van Houtte, lilac-rose. L.	60
Lucretia, light pink. E.	75
Marmontel, violet-rose. L.	1 50
Mary Pleas, pink. E.	1 00
Mlle. Juliette Dessert, crimson. E.	1 00
Mme. Chaumy, lilac-rose. M.	50
Mme. Coste, hydrangea-pink. E.	50
Mme. de Covin, white, shaded pink. M.	50
Noemie, white. E.	75
Phrynee, cream-white. M.	1 00
Portia, white. E.	1 50
Pottsi Nana, red. E.	2 00
Prolifera Tricolor, yellow, red, white. M.	75
Quaker Lady, flesh. E.	75
Queen Victoria, cream-white. M.	75
Reine d'Amour, light pink. M.	1 50
Sappho, mauve. M.	1 50
Sir Thomas Lipton, rose-crimson. E.	1 00
Souv. de l'Exp. de Bordeaux, violet-red. E.	1 00
Tessa, light rose. E.	1 00
Victoire d'Alma, carmine-rose. L.	75
Victor Lemoine, crimson. M.	50
Virgo Maria, white. E.	75
Viscounte de Forceville, pink. E.	75
Volcan, red. M.	2 50

These Peonies are the usual and standard 3 to 5 eye divisions, and, under normal conditions, should bloom next spring. Guaranteed true to name and description.

September Moving Sale of Farr's Superb Peonies

Odd Varieties and Novelties at a Half and a Quarter of Former Prices

You can afford to have my odd varieties and novelties in your garden even at full price, but I cannot afford to keep them, move them and handle them at double that price. Therefore, the time is here for a lot of *mutually ideal business transactions*.

I have selected a number of varieties which are to be closed out, not because they are poor but because I still have so many "best varieties" which by themselves are quite a moving problem.

The plants are worth much more than the sale price to you; they are not worth more to me. It is for you to decide whether some of them shall grace your garden or whether I shall scrap them.

Here is a list of Peonies which I will dispose of at little more than the actual digging and shipping cost.

- 1 root for half the latest catalog price.
- 3 roots of one variety for the latest catalog price of one.
- 10 or more roots of the same variety at 20 cts. each, regardless of the catalog price.
- 1 root each of the 60 varieties for \$20.
- 10 roots each of the 60 varieties (600 plants) for \$100.

For cut-flower purposes, at these prices, be roots will pay for themselves the second

